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Letter dated 18 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 18 March 1998 addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex, which contains a letter dated 5 March 1998 from His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, to the leader of the Greek Cypriot administration, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and a summary of the statement made by President Denktaş in connection with the peace initiative of the Turkish Cypriot side for the settlement of the Cyprus issue, could be circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tuluy TANÇ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Letter dated 18 March 1998 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of a letter dated 5 March 1998 addressed by His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, to the leader of the Greek Cypriot administration, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and a summary of the statement made by President Denktaş during a press conference held on 6 March 1998 in connection with the peace initiative of the Turkish Cypriot side for the settlement of the Cyprus issue.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its appendices circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ Plümer
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

APPENDIX I

Letter dated 5 March 1998 from Mr. Rauf Denktaş addressed to Mr. Glafcos Clerides

I would like to start this letter by congratulating you on your re-election as the Greek Cypriot President. It seems that there is still a need for the contribution of our generation to help our two peoples to live side by side in peace.

I am sure you will agree with me that we both continue to carry an historic responsibility to find a new approach for the final settlement of the basic questions which have burdened us for the past 34 years. We both remember well the sad events which brought us to this point. At this critical moment I wish to focus on the future.

I am convinced that the best way to build a better future is first to reach a common understanding on the guiding principles which will shape that future. Sincere commitment to those principles by both parties will give each side the hope and the assurance that the outcome will be responsive to their rights, needs and interests.

The fundamental point in the circumstances of Cyprus is clearly the sovereign equality of the two sides based on the principles of symmetry and mutual respect. This means the recognition by each party that the other is equally entitled to the rights and privileges that it enjoys and wants for itself. An unambiguous mutual commitment to these parameters can reverse the escalation of the conflict and break the vicious circle that has imprisoned both of our peoples over the years. It can also help the two sides bridge the gap between the uncertainties of the present and their hopes for the future.

In shaping our future the basic requirement is realism. Realism in Cyprus starts with the recognition of the fact that the independence and the sovereignty of Cyprus were entrusted in 1960 to the Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people as the two founding partners of the "Republic of Cyprus", with equal political status. Their separate rights to self-determination were explicitly recognized in 1956 and 1958 by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and subsequently by the United Nations. In other words, neither party can be the Government of the other or the Government of the whole island.

The second indispensable aspect of the same fact is the balance established between Turkey and Greece in Cyprus under the 1960 agreements. Two important prerequisites stem from these realities:

(a) Neither of the two sides have exclusive rights over the independence and sovereignty of Cyprus;

(b) The balance established between Turkey and Greece has to be respected and preserved.

The 1960 partnership State was destroyed in 1963 by the Greek Cypriot side. This was also an attempt to destroy the balance between Turkey and Greece which culminated in the 1974 coup designed to annex the island to Greece.

In the face of these grave developments, the Turkish Cypriot people set up their own administration under the Vice-President of Cyprus and later, in exercise of their equal sovereign rights and after a long evolutionary process, established the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. At the same time, they have insisted on the observance of the balance between Turkey and Greece.

It is not my intention to go into history. But I must point out that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared two decades after striving for the restoration of the partnership State, eight years after the population exchange agreement with you and only after the United Nations-facilitated talks for a political settlement were frustrated by the Greek Cypriot side.

The failure to reach a federal settlement, despite many years of negotiations, during which time your side flourished under the usurped and fictitious title of the 'Government of Cyprus' at the expense of our political and economic rights, and the ever-deepening mistrust resulting from this, have made such a solution untenable. Indeed, the Greek Cypriot side has repeatedly declared that it was not interested in a federal settlement as envisaged by the Secretary-General. The expectation that European Union membership would help you fulfil your selfish designs has resulted in your side-stepping a United Nations-facilitated solution by rejecting even the United Nations set of ideas.

I want to remind you that your unilateral European Union application and the treatment by the European Union of this application, under the influence of Greece, as a bona fide valid application for the whole of Cyprus have been, for us, the latest and gravest evidence that you have no intention of respecting our rights and creating a new and workable partnership. Successive embargo policies of the Greek Cypriot Government, the denial of our equal political rights and a readiness to resort to the use of force to impose your will, have demonstrated adequately your obsession with accomplishing your declared aim of completely Hellenizing Cyprus and dominating the Turkish Cypriot people.

These activities have been accompanied by efforts to undermine further the balance between Turkey and Greece. The adoption and the persistent implementation of the joint military doctrine with Greece, the opening of the Paphos airbase to station Greek combat aircraft and the prospective deployment of sophisticated S-300 missiles put in jeopardy the security and stability of the island, as well as the eastern Mediterranean.

Your departure from the agreed parameters of the negotiating process, clearly manifested in your rejection of the United Nations set of ideas, the unilateral European Union membership process you embarked upon in total disregard of the stipulation of the relevant treaties and the military activities you have undertaken have rendered the search for a federal settlement even more illusory. Under the prevailing conditions, insistence on such a solution can even be dangerous. The path you have taken by departing from the basis of the 1960 'state of affairs', namely the internal balance between our

two peoples and the external balance between the two guarantor motherlands promises nothing but further tension.

In spite of all this and the fact that previous negotiating experiences have been very costly for the Turkish Cypriot people, we still want peace and cooperation on the island as well as peace and cooperation between Turkey and Greece.

As we approach the year 2000, I believe we have to make a new beginning on the basis of the realities I referred to above. As a result of what has happened over the years, we now have two fully functioning democratic states on the island, each with its own people, territory and effective government, neither one having the legal or moral rights to claim to be the government of the other. Efforts to build a worthwhile future for both our peoples must therefore be based on the acknowledgement of the existence and equal status of our respective states. What needs to be done now is to work out an arrangement which will enable the two states to resolve certain basic matters, specifically the final settlement of reciprocal property claims, security issues and the delineation of borders. If we can do this, we will have achieved a new platform upon which the two peoples of the island and their states can peacefully coexist without claims against one another. When the two sides do reach this stage and create a climate of confidence then they may be in a position to visualize a joint future.

The time has come for both of us to show the necessary leadership so that future generations do not go through the bitter experiences that both you and I have endured, and instead equally benefit, in peace, mutual respect and cooperation, from the many opportunities that our island and region generously offer. Our primary aim must be the immediate achievement of a working relationship between our two states so that peace, stability and mutual trust can be secured and the danger of a new conflict is averted.

(Signed) Rauf R. DENKTAŞ
President

APPENDIX II

Summary of the statement made by Mr. Rauf Denktaş during a press conference on 6 March 1998

I look to the future of Cyprus with optimism. I believe that it is possible to make Cyprus a bridge of peace between the two guarantor motherlands through a balanced settlement.

If the structure established in 1960 in the form of an internal and external balance had not been destroyed with the objective of converting Cyprus into a Greek Cypriot republic, today there would have been no issue called the Cyprus issue.

Our efforts for the past 34 years to re-establish this balance have to rest on a realistic foundation.

In the circumstances in Cyprus today, sovereign equality based on mutual respect and a symmetry in relations has to be the basic starting point. We can embed these fundamentals, which constitute the basis of the 1960 Agreements, on a new foundation.

With the letter I sent to Mr. Clerides yesterday I have taken a new initiative towards the establishment of peace, stability and confidence between the two peoples and two states on the island.

Our efforts undertaken for building the future must be based on the acknowledgement of the existence and equal status of the two peoples and two states.

I propose to Mr. Clerides that we settle certain fundamental issues before us. These issues are the final settlement of reciprocal property claims, security issues and the delineation of borders. Once these issues are settled, we will reach the phase where it is possible to shape and visualize a joint future.

There is the need for a new approach and a new beginning. Only then can we attain a new Cyprus where the two peoples will live side by side in peace and security.

Our peoples desire peace. With this new initiative I am calling upon Mr. Clerides to join me in establishing a realistic peace and a new Cyprus. If we refrain from actions which overlook this reality, the road to bridges of goodwill will be opened.

I hope that Mr. Clerides will not fail to demonstrate this political will. We have before us a new and historical opportunity. We must use this opportunity jointly.

This morning I learned that Mr. Clerides refused to receive my letter. I regard this as a missed opportunity for Mr. Clerides. He has alleged that my views did not conform with the 1977 and 1979 high-level agreements.

I ask whether the Greek Cypriot side's unilateral bid for European Union membership is in accordance with the high-level agreements, which stipulate the non-alignment of Cyprus. Or is the construction of the military airbase in Paphos for use by Greece and the deployment of S-300 missiles in accordance with these agreements? It is very unfortunate for Mr. Clerides that he is attempting to realize full membership in the European Union in the shadow of the S-300 missiles.

Today I do not want to talk about such matters any further. I call upon Mr. Clerides to seize this opportunity rather than letting it pass by. I ask him not to overlook these realistic proposals, which will assist us in establishing a future which will benefit both peoples in Cyprus.

I have also informed the Secretary-General regarding my letter and proposals. I am addressing the international community. A historic opportunity has arisen for the settlement of a 34-year-old question, the attainment of peace and stability in the region, the prevention of new issues of discord and the realization of a new Cyprus. Let us join together in seizing this opportunity.